



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

ACT OFFICE

Mr John Hunt-Sharman
National President
Australian Federal Police Association
Level 9 AMP Tower
1 Hobart Place,
Canberra City ACT 2601
Australia.

Dear Mr Hunt-Sharman

I am writing to you to advise you that the Australian Government has recently passed legislation to extend the non-liability health care treatment eligibility period for Commonwealth Police employees who served in the Maralinga area around the time of the British Nuclear Test Program. Royal assent for this change was granted on 12 July 2008. As a result, some of your members may have become eligible for the treatment.

The non-liability health care treatment provides Government-funded treatment for all malignant neoplasia (cancers) for those who entered certain nuclear test areas as defined in the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*. Eligible ex-servicemen, Police and civilians are issued with a DVA White Card, which they can then present to treatment providers.

The non-liability health care treatment was introduced in 2006 in response to a study into the effects of participation in the British Nuclear Test Program, the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests in Australia Dosimetry, Cancer Incidence and Mortality Study*. The study found a higher incidence of cancers in this group but did not identify a causal connection between participation in the tests and the increased rate of cancer.

Until now, to have eligibility for the non-liability health care treatment, a person who served in the Maralinga area must have served between 27 September 1956 and 30 April 1965 (inclusive). However, scientific evidence has indicated that Commonwealth Police who patrolled the area after 1965 may have been exposed to contaminated dust, up until 1988 when safety and protection procedures were introduced. Therefore, the legislation has now been changed to encompass Commonwealth Police who served in the Maralinga nuclear test area between 27 September 1956 and 30 June 1988 (inclusive). The Maralinga nuclear test area is defined in the legislation as the area within 40 kilometres of any of the Buffalo or Antler test sites (see attached extract from the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*).

In order not to disadvantage Commonwealth Police who have only become eligible as a result of this change, the legislation contains a provision allowing reimbursement of cancer treatment costs back to 19 June 2006 (the date of effect of the original legislation) if they claim within six months of the commencement of the change to the legislation. In practice this means that they must claim before 12 January 2009 to receive the full benefit back to 19 June 2006. Claims outside the six month period will attract a reimbursement period of three months prior to the lodgement of the claim.

If any of your members believe that they may be eligible for the non-liability health care treatment, they can contact my Department on 1800 044 029 for further information and to request a claim form.

I hope this information is helpful to you and your members, and I would appreciate your assistance in disseminating this information amongst former Commonwealth Police.

Yours sincerely



Sean Farrelly
National Manager
Compensation & Income Support Policy

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